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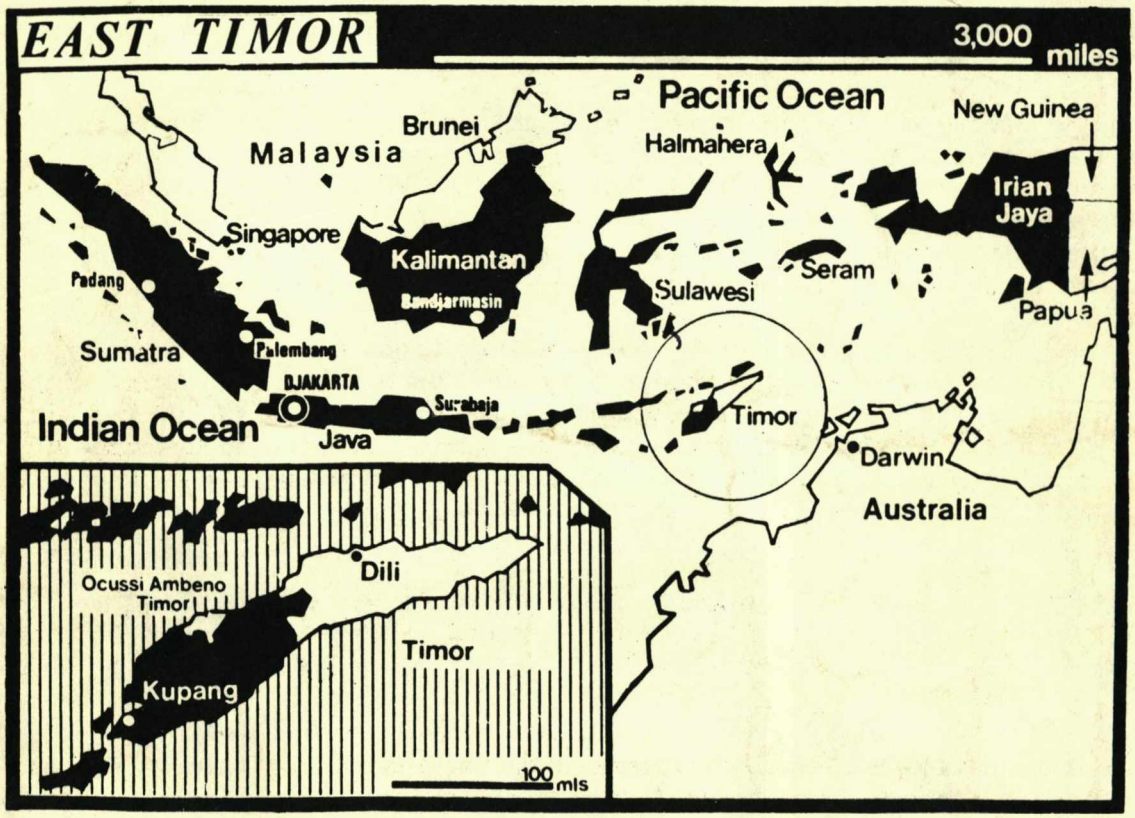
INDONESIAN INTERVENTION IN EAST TIMOR

A CHRONOLOGY



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April 10, 1977

BACKGROUND ON EAST TIMOR

East Timor was a Portuguese colony for nearly 450 years. In the twentieth century, Timor served as a place of exile for Portugal's political dissidents, particularly under the Salazar regime. During the Second World War, the territory suffered a harsh Japanese occupation, which grew especially brutal when the East Timorese began to assist a company of Australian commandos who were conducting effective guerrilla warfare against the Japanese. More than 50,000 East Timorese died during the war. Current Australian protest of the Indonesian invasion stems in part from sympathies on both sides during that period, as many Australians have never forgotten the help they received from East Timor.

Under Portuguese rule, there were virtually no advances in education, medical care, or economic development. A 1972 survey showed the illiteracy rate to be more than 90%, the infant mortality rate at more than 50%, and per capita income at $30 per year. East Timor's economy derived foreign exchange almost exclusively from one product, coffee, although potential existed for agricultural diversification, a fishing industry, and oil production.

In early 1970, a group of young nationalists began to hold discussions on the state of the territory, and in this way began to come to grips with the problems of the country. After the fall of Portuguese fascism, the discussion group members helped to form the Timorese Social Democratic Association, which later became FRETILIN, the movement which is presently waging guerrilla war against an Indonesian invasion.

This information bulletin was prepared by the East Timor Information and Research Project and the Cornell East Timor Association. Additional copies may be obtained from 410 Stewart Avenue, Ithaca, New York 14850.

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EAST TIMOR: A BRIEF CHRONOLOGY

April 25, 1974	A military coup in Lisbon brings nearly 50 years of fascist rule in Portugal to an end.
	In a new climate of political freedom for Portugal's colonies, three political groups are formed in East Timor over the following three months. They are the ASDT (Timorese Social Democratic Association), which subsequently changes its name to FRETILIN (Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor), a group favoring independence; UDT (Timorese Democratic Union), favoring continued association with Portugal; and APODETI (Timorese Popular Democratic Association), favoring East Timor's incorporation into Indonesia. It soon becomes clear that APODETI has far less support than the other two.
June 17	Jose Ramos Horta, Secretary of the ASDT's Political Committee, visits Jakarta, and obtains a written assurance from the Indonesian Foreign Minister, Adam Malik, that Indonesia has no objection to East Timor's becoming independent. "The independence of every country is the right of every nation, with no exception for the people in Timor," says Malik.
October	Indonesian radio starts carrying broadcasts hostile to the idea of an independent East Timor, attacking FRETILIN as communist and UDT as fascist.
January 1975	UDT and FRETILIN enter into a pro-independence coalition.
May 1975	Upon the return of a group of its leaders from a visit in Jakarta with the Deputy Chief of Indonesia's Central Intelligence Agency (BAKIN), General Ali Murtopo, UDT breaks off its coalition with FRETILIN.
August 10-30	In obvious collusion with Indonesia, UDT stages a "show of force" in the East Timor capital, Dili. Pro-UDT police units execute scores of FRETILIN members. Timorese regular forces (of the Portuguese Army) subsequently leave their barracks to support FRETILIN, which finally emerges in control of East Timor.
September-November	Acknowledging Portugal's continuing sovereignty, a FRETILIN de facto government takes steps to normalize conditions after the bloodshed of August. Overseas journalists and aid teams visit the country and report that there is widespread support for the FRETILIN administration.

September 17 — An Indonesian military incursion into the border village of Batugade begins a phase of low-level warfare between Indonesian and East Timorese units.

November 28 — East Timor's independence from Portugal is declared by Xavier do Amaral, President of FRETILIN. The declaration is made after more than 2 months of "creeping invasion" by Indonesian soldiers on the western border, at a time when a much larger invasion is feared, and Portugal is not expected to be able to defend its claims to sovereignty.

November 30 — General Ali Murtopo says that Indonesia is preparing to intervene militarily in East Timor. (Washington Post)

December 4 — FRETILIN appeals to President Ford, who is in Peking and about to visit Jakarta, to prevent an Indonesian invasion of the territory. (Los Angeles Times)

December 5 — President Ford and Secretary of State Kissinger arrive in Jakarta for a 19-hour state visit with President Suharto. Ford gives Suharto assurances of continued U.S. "security assistance". Kissinger tells Reuters that "the United States understands Indonesia's position on the question of East Timor."

Three ministers of the newly formed government of East Timor, Mari Alkatiri (Minister of Political Affairs), Rogerio Lobato (Minister of Defense), and Jose Ramos Horta (Minister of Foreign Affairs and Information), leave East Timor in anticipation of an invasion.

December 7 — Less than 12 hours after the U.S. presidential party leaves Jakarta, Indonesia launches an air and sea invasion of Dili, the capital of East Timor, and Baucau, the second largest town.

East Timor's radio reports, "The Indonesians have invaded. Their soldiers are in Dili. They are killing indiscriminately. Women and children are being shot in the streets," then goes dead.

Anticipating the invasion, FRETILIN had dispersed food, fuel, weapons, and ammunition throughout the rugged, mountainous interior of the country.

December 8

Indonesian Foreign Minister Adam Malik describes the invading forces as "volunteers". David Andelman reports in the New York Times that "Malik's statement was seen as a response to the warnings of many American diplomats that overt military action, particularly with the use of American materiel, could jeopardize the proposal for $43 million in military aid to Indonesia then pending before Congress."

Adam Malik says that he did not believe that the Indonesian action would affect the flow of U.S. aid to Jakarta. "We did not use American weapons there," Malik said, adding, "why should comrades make noise?" (Washington Post)

Portugal breaks off diplomatic relations with Indonesia. Portugal's ambassador to the U.N. calls for a Security Council meeting on the question of Indonesian aggression against East Timor.

Indonesia announces the formation of a "Provisional Government of East Timor," headed by Arnaldo Araujo, the President of APODETI. In 1946, Araujo was convicted of wartime collaboration with the Japanese. At that time, evidence was given in a civilian court in Dili that he had led a force known as the Black Column against East Timorese sympathetic toward the Allied cause.

The Christian Science Monitor reports that "Indonesia may be in for a nasty guerrilla war....FRETILIN has considerable support among the people in the hinterland."

December 10

Adam Malik, in an apparent reference to international criticism of the invasion, says: "Let the dogs bark, the caravan will go on." (Washington Post)

December 12

The U.N. General Assembly calls on Indonesia to withdraw all its military forces from East Timor "without delay".

The 144-nation Assembly asks Indonesia to desist from "further violation of the territorial integrity of the country." The vote is 69-11. States supporting the resolution include Australia, Brazil, China, Greece, Mexico, Mozambique, Pakistan, Portugal, Sweden, the USSR, and Tanzania. 38 states, including the U.S., abstain from voting.

A Washington Post editorial refers to Indonesia's "felonious and forcible" invasion of East Timor.

December 13 — A New York Times editorial condemns the Indonesian invasion, calling on Congress to examine carefully the proposal for $43 million in military aid to Indonesia. The editorial describes the Indonesian invasion as a "lightning takeover".

The Foreign Minister of the newly established East Timor government, Jose Ramos Horta, tells a New York press conference that heavy fighting is continuing in many parts of East Timor, including Dili itself. Citing messages received from FRETILIN radio via Darwin, Australia, Horta says that many of the Indonesian weapons captured are of U.S. manufacture. Horta also indicates that U.S.-supplied warships are being used in the naval blockade that has been maintained around Timor since September 1975. According to Horta, the U.S. therefore has the right to demand a ceasefire and the withdrawal of Indonesian forces.

December 22 — The U.N. Security Council unanimously calls on Indonesia to withdraw from East Timor without delay. The Council also instructs the U.N. Secretary-General to send a fact-finding mission to the area.

December 25 — Indonesian forces launch a second offensive in East Timor. Reports leaked by Australian intelligence state that between 15,000 and 20,000 troops were used in this second offensive, in contrast to the 4,000-6,000 deployed in the offensive of December 7.

The American press gives almost no coverage to the second offensive. It subsequently persists in accepting the official Indonesian view that FRETILIN resistance is of minor and dwindling significance.

January 4, 1976 — A Reuters dispatch says that FRETILIN radio has reported that Indonesian planes have been using incendiary bombs in certain areas of East Timor.

January 8 — A report in the Canberra-based daily, The Australian, says that Indonesia has been using an unidentified chemical spray that causes symptoms similar to the flu.

January 9 — The London Guardian cites Australian intelligence, using information based on the monitoring of Indonesian communications traffic in the area, to the effect that there has been widespread killing of non-combatants by the Indonesians.

The Guardian also quotes Australian intelligence sources as saying that new information has emerged indicating that the five Australian journalists believed accidentally killed in Balibo, East Timor on October 16, 1975, had in fact been executed on Indonesian orders.

January 20 — FRETILIN names four possible sites within FRETILIN-controlled territory for a rendezvous with U.N. Secretary-General Waldheim's Special Representative, Vittorio Winspeare Guicciardi.

January 25 — The Australian Commonwealth Police seize FRETILIN radio in Darwin, the Australian city closest to Timor, on the grounds that its operator is unlicensed. This makes it impossible for FRETILIN to arrange a visit by Waldheim's representative to FRETILIN-controlled areas of East Timor.

February 7 — East Timor's Foreign Minister Jose Ramos Horta protests to Security Council President Daniel P. Moynihan about the continued Indonesian naval blockade and air bombardment of East Timor. He also protests to the Australian government about its refusal to supply an airplane by which Special Representative Guicciardi might be able to reach FRETILIN-held areas of East Timor.

February 15 — The vice-president of the Indonesian-created "Provisional Government of East Timor", Francisco Lopez da Cruz, says in Jakarta that 60,000 East Timorese have died as a result of the recent fighting. This figure would represent nearly one-tenth of East Timor's 650,000 people.

March 3 — Representative Thomas Harkin (D-Iowa) proposes on the floor of the House that the Military Assistance Program aid of $19.4 million to Indonesia be eliminated.

Rep. Harkin stresses the Indonesian invasion of East Timor as a major reason why aid should be cut off. "The question to be answered," he said, "is whether the Congress condones Indonesia's acts of aggression."

The amendment is defeated.

April 22 — The U.N. Security Council reaffirms its December 22, 1975 resolution calling on Indonesia to "withdraw its forces from East Timor without delay." The United States abstains on the vote. According to the New York Times, Indonesia's position is "discreetly backed by the United States."

April 29 — Jose Martins, a member of the "Provisional Government of East Timor" delegation to the December 1975 U.N. debates, changes his position. In a letter to U.N. Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim, Martins writes: "I came in December not as a free man. I was forced, like the others then, as a prisoner, to read what the Indonesians had written."

May 2 — An article in the Washington Post says that the United States is concerned that Australia's relations with Indonesia have become strained as a result of Australia's position on the question of East Timor, and that "American diplomats in the area are working overtime to contain the dispute."

May 27 — The Indonesian government bans the publication of a book critical of its Timor policies. The book, "Why We Are Isolated in the World", was written by newspaper editor and former Minister of Information B. M. Diah.

May 31 — The Indonesian-sponsored "Provisional Government of East Timor" holds a "People's Assembly" in Dili. Twenty journalists are flown to Dili for a visit of three hours. None of the journalists had ever visited East Timor before. In addition, 25 states are invited to send diplomatic representatives, but only 7 do so.

According to Hamish McDonald, one of those who made the three-hour visit, "Today's meeting is presented as an act of self-determination. The observers had no chance to probe its authenticity, however. Proceedings were held in Portuguese and explanations were sketchy. No opportunity was given to meet the representatives of the People's Representative Council." (Washington Post) According to Peter Monkton of the Australian Broadcasting Commission, reporters were not allowed to stray from the immediate area of the Assembly Hall.

June 24 — FRETILIN gunfire prevents the scheduled landing at Baucau airport of a group of Indonesian officials led by Minister of State Sumarlin.

July 2 — Sources in Jakarta say that over 100 soldiers of the Indonesian KKO (Marine Corps) have gone over to the FRETILIN forces in East Timor.

July 17 — Indonesia announces that East Timor has been formally incorporated into the nation as its 27th province.

July 27 — UDT leaders in Portugal issue a statement applauding the refusal of the Portuguese government to accept the integration of East Timor into Indonesia. "The leaders of our party in Dili are prisoners in the technical sense. Their actions are therefore null and void."

July 28 — Indonesia releases 23 Portuguese soldiers held prisoner since August, 1975. Forty-five prominent East Timorese, including Joao Carrescalao, former chairman of UDT, are evacuated as well. Both the soldiers and the East Timorese are instructed not to talk with newsmen in Lisbon.

August 2 — Michael Richardson, Singapore correspondent for the Melbourn-based daily The Age, reports that U.S. officials in Southeast Asia have warned Australia not to allow further deterioration of relations with Indonesia over the issue of East Timor. According to Richardson, the U.S. believes that control of East Timor by a "friendly anti-communist" government is of direct strategic interest to the United States, because one fast and safe way for American nuclear-armed submarines to pass undetected between the Pacific and Indian Oceans is through the Ombai-Wetai straits north of Timor Island.

Independent analysts doubt that the Ombai-Wetai straits are of any special significance to the U.S. These analysts believe that the warning to Australia is part of a strategy to end Australian govenment criticism of the Timor invasion.

August 18 — A London Times article headlined "East Timor Fighting Mars Indonesia's Anniversary" cites growing disaffection in the Indonesian Army over what is termed "Indonesia's Vietnam".

August 24 — The Colombo Summit Conference of Non-Aligned Nations discusses the East Timor issue, despite Indonesian protestations. In the final communique, the conference lists East Timor among non-self-governing territories "still to be liberated".

August 26 — The Sydney Morning Herald quotes Indonesian strongman Suharto as saying that FRETILIN still possesses some strength in areas of the former Portuguese colony. Suharto's remarks are the first public admission by the Indonesian government that FRETILIN is still a force to be reckoned with.

September 20

Indonesia closes off waters around East Timor and warns that foreign ships will be fired upon. The Indonesian move is apparently part of a buildup of forces against the FRETILIN guerrillas who have been claiming military successes in preceding weeks, according to The Australian.

American sources assert that the U.S. has delivered the first three of sixteen Vought A-7 Corsair jets ordered by Indonesia. In addition, the first three of sixteen propeller-driven Rockwell OV-10 Broncos were also delivered, say the sources. Both planes are suitable for ground attack and napalm bombing.

October 5

President Suharto, in his Armed Forces Day speech, pays homage to the "volunteers" who have died in East Timor. Analysts see Suharto as responding to pressure from military wives and widows for recognition of their husbands' sacrifices in the continuing and unacknowledged war.

November 17

The 4th Committe of the U.N. General Assembly, in reaffirming its previous resolutions and that of the Security Council, strongly deplores the consistent refusal of the Indonesian government to comply with the provisions of these resolutions. The General Assembly rejects the claim that East Timor has been integrated into Indonesia, and "reaffirms the inalienable right of the people of East Timor to self-determination and independence, and the legitimacy of their struggle to achieve that right."

The vote is 61-18, with 49 abstentions. The United States votes against the resolution.

November 19

A highly confidential report given to the Australian government, sections of which are published in the Melbourne Age, says that FRETILIN still controls about 85% of the countryside in East Timor, and that fighting is widespread.

The five-page document, smuggled out of Indonesia, was prepared by relief workers who recently visited East Timor. According to the Melbourne Age, the document "is regarded by Australian officials as one of the most authentic accounts of the situation in East Timor since Indonesian troops invaded the former Portuguese colony late last year."

The report confirms that 60,000 East Timorese have been killed since the Indonesian invasion. The reports also says that 20,000 people in Dili, out of a total population of 30,000, have registered themselves for passage to Portugal.

December 1 — A Plenary meeting of the U.N. General Assembly votes 68-20, with 49 nations abstaining, to uphold the resolution of November 17. Nations voting for the resolution include Brazil, China, Colombia, Greece, Iceland, Mozambique, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, and the USSR. Nations opposing the resolution include Chile, Iran, Thailand, the United States, and Uruguay.

December 7 — Reliable Indonesian military sources recently returned from Dili say that Indonesian military control around Dili extends only 500 yards outside the town--during the daytime. The sources say that at night the outer streets of Dili are unsafe for Indonesian forces.

January 16, 1977 — Australian parliamentarian Gordon Bryant calls for a full international inquiry into Indonesian atrocities in Timor.

Bryant and James S. Dunn have been conducting extensive interviews with Timorese refugees in Portugal.

(Dunn, former Australian consul in East Timor, is a specialist in Indonesian and Timorese affairs. He is currently head of the Australian Parliament's foreign affairs research unit. His trip to Portugal, however, has been made on a non-official basis.)

"There is mounting evidence of continuing atrocities of the order for which we hanged people after the Second World War," Bryant says. (The Melbourne Age)

January 17 — Indonesian Home Minister Amir Machmud says that upcoming national elections in May will not cover East Timor. The present situation in the territory will not allow the holding of elections, Machmud tells reporters. He does not elaborate. (Associated Press)

February 2 — Unofficial Indonesian sources reveal that one of the six American-supplied OV-10 Bronco counter-insurgency planes currently being used in Timor has crashed. (The Melbourne Age)

February 11 — Dunn presents to the Australian government a 17-page dossier based on interviews conducted in Portugal. The Dunn report asserts that the situation in Timor "might well constitute, relatively speaking, the most serious case of contravention of human rights facing the world at this time."

February 28 — Six leading members of the Australian Labor Party write to Representative Donald Fraser of the House International Relations Committee, requesting that he look into charges of human rights

violations in East Timor. Rep. Fraser (Democrat--Minnesota) chairs the House Subcommittee on International Organizations, a panel concerned with human rights issues as they relate to U.S. policy.

March 1 — Ninety-four members of the Australian Parliament sign a petition asking President Carter to comment publicly on the situation in East Timor.

March 10 — Dunn is invited to testify before the Fraser Subcommittee.

International Oil Limited of Australia announces its decision to abandon its concession on the Indonesian (western) side of Timor. Mention is made of "numerous operational difficulties over the last two years because of the war in nearby East Timor." (Australian Financial Review)

March 15 — Indonesian Foreign Minister Adam Malik warns Australia not to allow Dunn to testify in the U.S. Congress, hinting that if he does, "spontaneous" demonstrations will be unleashed against the Australian embassy in Jakarta.

March 16 — The U.S. State Department, with the backing of the Australian and Indonesian embassies in Washington, arranges for the hearings on Timor to proceed under the joint sponsorship of the Asia and Pacific Subcommittee and the Fraser subcommittee.

The Asia and Pacific Subcommittee, headed by Rep. Lester Wolff (Democrat-New York) is seen as being less concerned with human rights issues than the Fraser subcommittee. According to a cable allegedly leaked by an Australian Foreign Affairs Department source, the feeling is that "joint hearings might dissipate, to some extent, the intensity of criticism of Indonesia on human rights violations." (Australian Broadcasting Company--ABC)

Hamish McDonald, writing in the Australian Financial Review, states that "both the Indonesian government and the United States State Department have labored in recent months to keep Indonesia out of the limelight as concern for human rights takes a bigger role in American policy formulation and consideration of aid requests."

March 17 — Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Robert Oakley tells the Asia and Pacific Subcommittee that the Ford Administraton stopped all military assistance to Indonesia from December 1975 to June 1976 because of reports of barbarity by Indonesian troops in East Timor.

Oakley adds that the Ford Administration later resumed military assistance and recognized Indonesia's annexation. He claims

that the Carter Administration is following the same policy. "As a result, if Indonesia uses any of the $58 million in U.S. military assistance requested for fiscal 1978 in East Timor, it is defending its own territory," Oakley says.

The $58 million request is a 25% increase over the amount of military assistance approved by Congress in fiscal 1977.

March 23

Dunn testifies before the joint hearing. He states that he has learned that all mail from East Timor bound for Portugal has been stopped, presumably to prevent further disclosures that would be harmful to Indonesia.

The U.S. State Department says that Dunn's charges of Indonesian atrocities "have been greatly exaggerated" and that there is "no useful purpose" in questioning Indonesia's annexation of East Timor.

Despite the State Department's admission that Indonesian troops invaded East Timor with American-supplied weapons, two pro-Indonesian East Timorese also testifying deny that East Timor was ever invaded.

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